

prehending the supervention of fever; for the very means they employ as preventives are the most likely to occasion it, so that their daily practice more and more confirms their apprehensions, which would be perfectly groundless under a different method of treatment. For instance, if means were taken to preserve the muscular power, instead of to impair it, the body would remain firm and unexcitable under all circumstances short of very acute disease. It is extraordinary that any argument to this effect should be necessary, it being so generally admitted that irritability exists in proportion to debility. What is pyrexia, but the general excitement of an irritable frame? And thousands there are who, having been subjected to the antiphlogistic treatment for the removal of an inflammatory disease, have become so excitable, that a glass of wine, or a small quantity of animal food, produces fever for several hours; this effect, which ought to be expected but not dreaded, determines the invalid to avoid a similar indulgence until he is quite recovered. Habit, however, becomes in time second nature; the invalid virtually remains a convalescent during the rest of his life, ever finding that a small quantity of stimulating food induces temporary fever; and so long as he continues thus over anxious to prevent the recurrence of disease, he actually prevents the recurrence of health; he becomes a perfect hot-house plant, liable to be influenced by every slight change of weather, clothing, or diet. It is astonishing that the common sense of the patient does not interdict such super-refinement of the medical art.

The antiphlogistic treatment impairs the tone of the heart and bloodvessels, as well as the general muscular system, laying the foundation for hemorrhages, which are perpetuated, the constitution becoming completely undermined, by persisting in the same method of treatment. Much more might be said of the injurious tendency of this system.

The treatment of febrile and inflammatory disorders ought to be reconsidered by the profession. If proper care were taken to ascertain their causes, and a plan of treatment adopted in strict reference to their respective effects, a really scientific system of practice might be established; it would then be found that some cases require a very different plan of management from others, and that in comparatively few instances would the acute form of disease appear. When prejudice in favour of the antiphlogistic system is removed, it will be found that there are no instances, excepting in dislocations, and one or two

others, in which the muscular power ought to be reduced by the loss of blood; and when the antiphlogistic treatment shall become obsolete, mankind will be relieved from more than half the ailments to which it is at present subject.

January 10, 1835.

## ACETUM OPII SEDATIVUM.

*To the Editor of THE LANCET.*

SIR,—Having had the honour of presenting a paper to the *Medico-Chirurgical Society*, which was read at their last meeting (January 13th 1835), entitled “On the Preparation of the Acetum Opii Sedativum, and its use as a Sedative in the Treatment of Mania, Melancholia, and Puerperal Mania,” I will, with your permission, extract that portion of the paper which refers to the preparation, &c.; and I shall feel honoured by its insertion in your valuable Journal, in order that the profession may have the opportunity of preparing and giving it a trial, as it is considered to be highly deserving of employment, by authorities so eminent as Drs. Elliotson and Paris.\* To Dr. Elliotson I am indebted for its name. I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

J. H. HORNE, Surg. &c.  
5, Gerrard-street, Soho,  
Jan. 14, 1835.

*Formulary.*—Take three times the quantity of the best opium, reduced to fine powder, that is ordered by the London Pharmacopœia, for two pints of tincture. Add to the opium two pints of dilute acetic acid. After they have digested a few hours, add to them six or eight pints of rectified spirits of wine. Macerate about seven days, and then carefully filter, in order to separate the insoluble parts of the opium. Introduce the liquor into a retort, accurately closed, and distil off the spirit. The product in the retort, after the spirit has all passed over, is the required acetum opii sedativum.

If the distillation be carefully conducted, the result will always prove of one uni-

\* In commendation of the process and preparation, I am proud to add the following valuable testimony from Dr. Paris:—“To Mr. Horne.—Sir,—I do not see any objection to the process you have suggested for obtaining an acetic solution of the active matter of opium. The product is certainly highly distinguished by its narcotic odour and flavour. I think it merits a trial, for we cannot be too well provided with a variety of forms of so important a medicine. Yours, &c.,”

J. A. PARIS.

“Jan. 7, 1835.”

form strength. 1 ℥ will be equivalent to iij minims Tincturæ Opii, free from spirit; and will keep, unchangeable, for an indefinite time.

The Acetum Opii Sedativum will be found to be the same as, or very similar to, Mr. Battley's *Liq. Opii Sedativus* (except in its strength, which latter falls short, according to the opinion of our most able experimentalists, as nearly j to ij, instead of j to iij), a preparation too well known to require description, except in regard to its mode of formation, which the preparer, in spite of his ranking as a scientific druggist, has hitherto kept a profound secret. Should this slight effort of mine be the means of eliciting that secret, my object, in part, will be attained.

The rationale of the process may be briefly stated, as follows:—The acetic acid unites with the morphine of the opium, forming an acetate of morphia, which is held in solution by the diluted acid; the remaining ingredients of the opium, acted on by the rectified spirits of wine, are extracted, and detained by the acid, after the spirit has been distilled over. I shall be happy to give a fuller description, if required by any of your numerous correspondents, should the subject be considered of sufficient interest to be allowed to excite inquiry in your useful and scientific Journal.

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## THE LANCET.

*London, Saturday, Jan. 17, 1835.*

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WHEN it is alleged that the system of government in the College of Surgeons in London requires no change, every reasonable man must feel inclined to ask,—What has that College accomplished for the profession since the charter which it now possesses was granted to that body in the year 1800? If we were to assume, or (to use a stronger term) to admit, that the College has acted as a constant stimulus to professional exertion,—that it has inspired the minds of men of genius, and thus promoted advantageous discoveries in medicine,—then we should not be devoid of arguments favouring the perpetuity of the existing mode of managing its affairs. On

the other hand, if, during the last thirty-five years, it has done nothing for medicine,—if it has rendered the Museum useless by the non-production of a printed catalogue, and the destruction of a manuscript guide to its contents,—if it has afforded no protection to the members of the commonalty in the rightful exercise of their professional duties, and if, from the character and terms of the charter, it is not in a condition to afford them protection,—those who contend that the present system of governing the College demands no change, must either be blind to the true interests of the profession, or must expect that their own individual welfare will be promoted by the partial and unjust proceeding of the Council.

Until within a very recent period, our *municipal* corporations were regarded as models of just organization for regulating commercial interests and policy. But the growing intelligence of the nation, aided by the efforts of the press, detected many abuses in those “perfect” establishments.

Defects being once exposed, suspicion was awakened, and a general scrutiny into their affairs was demanded. And what is the result of the inquiry? Precisely what all reasonable men expected, viz. proofs that wherever the principle of self-election has been in operation, the proceedings have been so contrived as to benefit the governors to the injury of the governed. Hence the question now at issue throughout the country, between medical reformers and the managers of our Colleges, and between the reformers generally and the governors of municipal and other corporations, is simply this, Shall the exclusive or the democratic principle henceforth prevail in the government of our national institutions?

On putting this question to the members of the medical profession at this important crisis in their affairs, we would implore them to reflect on what has been